

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A piston engine comprising at least one balance shaft unit in whose crankcase a crankshaft is supported and at whose crankcase ~~(2)~~ a window ~~(36)~~ surrounded by a flange ~~(16; 16, 17)~~ is provided at the side, with the flange forming a joint face to which the housing ~~(20; 20, 21)~~ of the balance shaft unit ~~(18; 18, 19)~~ is fastened by means of screws ~~(70)~~, with a balance shaft being supported in said housing,

~~characterized in that~~

~~a) wherein~~ the balance shaft ~~(22; 22, 23)~~ has a gear ~~(24; 24, 25)~~, which projects through the window ~~(36)~~ into the interior of the crankcase ~~(2)~~, and which is driven by a gear ~~(10)~~ seated on the crankshaft ~~(6)~~;

~~b) and wherein~~ the housing ~~(20; 20, 21)~~ of the balance shaft unit ~~(18; 18, 19)~~ has a joint face ~~(40; 40, 41)~~, which is displaceable on the joint face ~~(40; 40, 41)~~ of the crankcase ~~(2)~~ for the setting of the gear clearance before the screws ~~(70)~~ are tightened.

2. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 1 ~~characterized in that, wherein~~ a second balance shaft unit ~~(19)~~ is provided in whose housing ~~(21)~~ a further intermediate shaft ~~(35)~~ is supported in addition to the second balance shaft ~~(34)~~ with an intermediate gear ~~(34)~~ which meshes, on the one hand, with the gear ~~(25)~~ of the balance shaft ~~(23)~~ and, on the other hand, with the gear ~~(10)~~ seated on the crankshaft ~~(6)~~.

3. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 1 ~~characterized in that, wherein~~ the joint face ~~(40; 40, 41)~~ includes an obtuse angle ~~(44)~~ with the connection straight line of the axes of the crankshaft and the balance shaft in a section imagined normal to the crankshaft axis ~~(6')~~.

4. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the joint faces ~~(40; 40, 41)~~ are parallel to the plane of symmetry of the engine.

5. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein at least one sliding guide ~~(65, 66, 67)~~ is provided in the joint faces ~~(40; 40, 41)~~ of the crankcase ~~(2)~~ and of the housing ~~(20; 20, 21)~~ of the balance shaft unit ~~(18; 18, 19)~~ and permits a displacement in a plane normal to the crankshaft ~~(6)~~.

6. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the sliding guide ~~(65, 66, 67)~~ ~~consists of~~comprises a straight groove ~~(66)~~ in the sliding direction in the joint face ~~(40; 40, 41)~~ and of a key ~~(65)~~ let into the joint face.

7. (currently amended) A piston engine in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the balance shaft ~~(22; 22, 23)~~ runs around in divided bearings in its housing ~~(20; 20, 21)~~, with the one bearing half ~~(28; 28, 29)~~ being formed in the housing

~~{20; 20, 21}~~ of the balance shaft unit ~~{18; 18, 19}~~ and the other being made as a bearing cover ~~{30}~~ connected to the first bearing half ~~{28; 28, 29}~~.

8. A piston engine in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the balance shaft ~~{22; 22, 23}~~ runs around in undivided bearings ~~{28*}~~ in its housing ~~{20; 20, 21}~~.

9. A piston engine in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the gear ~~{24; 24, 25}~~ of the balance shaft is arranged at its center.

10. A piston engine in accordance with claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the gear ~~{24}~~ of the first balance shaft unit ~~{18}~~ and the intermediate gear ~~{34}~~ of the second balance shaft unit ~~{19}~~ mesh with the gear ~~{10}~~ seated on the crankshaft ~~{6}~~ at positions ~~{42, 43}~~ mutually offset by 180 degrees.